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SUBJECT: RUSSIA STILL UNDECIDED ON HELICOPTERS FOR UNAMID

REF: STATE 02736

We requested information from MFA International Organizations Directorate Counsellor Albert Sitnikov on the status of the proposals for Russia to provide helicopters to the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (reftel). Sitnikov told us January 11 that the MOD was still considering two options: A "dry lease," to provide the helicopters to the UN, with the UN finding pilots and logistics support from another source; and a "wet lease," in which Russia would also provide the technical maintenance teams. Sitnikov said he expected the MOD would have an answer by January 15 or 16, but he could not say whether they would agree to provide the helicopters under either scenario. We urged the MFA to weigh in with the MOD to support the provision of helicopters to UNAMID.
RUSSELL